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S E C R E T GUATEMALA 000927

SIPDIS

HARARE FOR DAVID WHARTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [SNAR](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR PRESSES TORTURE CASE WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE MORAN

REF: A. GUATEMALA 770

[B](#). GUATEMALA 884

[C](#). GUATEMALA 801

Classified By: Robert E. Copley for reasons 1.5 (b)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador called on Minister of Defense Robin Moran on April 3 to emphasize that resorting to illegal detention and torture as appears to have occurred in the March 6 drug seizure in Rio Hondo, Zacapa is totally unacceptable. Moran clearly understood that these methods put Guatemala's recertification at risk. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Following up on similar calls on President Portillo (ref A) and the Minister of Interior (ref B), the Ambassador made clear to Moran that attempting to fight drugs in this way is not only counter-productive, it is wrong on every count. Such methods are unnecessary and hugely prejudicial to the GOG's efforts to be certified as a fully cooperating partner on drugs. The Ambassador reminded Moran that similar (albeit, more serious) abuses last year by the former anti-narcotics police (DOAN) in the Chocon case were a major reason for decertification as well as the Embassy's decision to severely restrict its assistance to the DOAN.

[1](#)3. (S) The Ambassador told Moran that there were strong allegations that the military (as opposed to police) were responsible for the abuses. He added that the personnel involved appear to have planted drugs on the three people detained and that, too, is totally unacceptable.

[1](#)4. (C) Moran, who had clearly anticipated the purpose of the Ambassador's visit, started to make a lame defense, but decided better to drop it. Moran said that he had already given strict orders limiting the military's role in the counter-narcotics effort to providing transportation to police and prosecutors and to providing perimeter security when an operation is mounted.

[1](#)5. (C) Comment: Moran seemed to clearly understand that the abusive methods evidenced in the Zacapa seizure put recertification at risk. If not for the Zacapa incident, Moran might have hoped for congratulations from the Ambassador due to recent successes involving effective military support for counter-narcotics police operations (ref C) that demonstrate the type of results possible with proper cooperation. Instead, the Ambassador treated Moran to a close inspection of the military's black-eye over this incident.
HAMILTON